After the Mark

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After the Mark

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Summary

It's another day of their new life, but Hannibal is still thinking about the mark Will left on the wall of his prison room and Will's intentions after that gesture.

Notes

This is a sequel to Handprint, so we would suggest you to read that one before this.

See the end of the work for more notes

“Where are you?”

Hannibal’s lips curved slightly upwards at the question as he offered Will a lathered up plate, which he took to rinse it. A familiar and soothing pattern, something they were used to do every night after dinner.

“I’m sorry,” he said, taking the kitchen rag to dry his hands while Will finished. “I’m afraid I’ve been somewhat absent today, haven’t I?”

“You could say that… I kind of missed your interminable lectures. Silence doesn’t suit to the creator of *An evening discussing Stravinsky* or *Mythos and the etymology of the word cereal*” Will answered, huffing out a laugh. But Hannibal sensed that there was no annoyance in the tone of his voice.

Hannibal leaned against the counter while Will finished with the last of the things they had used for dinner. And as soon as he dried his hands, Will moved closer and caged Hannibal, both hands flat on the counter on either side. Hannibal felt the warmth his body radiated immediately, even through their clothes.

“I apologize for my behavior,” Hannibal said, tilting his head to add a little drama to his statement.

“I have to admit, you’ve been a little rude. It felt like I was having dinner all by myself. What was that you said to me, years ago? Whenever feasible…” Will started saying, leaning in.

“One should always try to eat the rude,” Hannibal finished, caught in the spell Will’s closeness always put on him.

He felt Will’s breath on the corner of his mouth right before his lips brushed Hannibal’s, almost as if asking for permission. Hannibal’s eyes closed immediately at the same time that his lips parted, welcoming Will’s own, his teeth and tongue eliciting a sound that came out from the deepest part of Hannibal’s throat. But just as he was wrapping his hands around Will’s waist, the other pulled back, abruptly breaking the contact. In return for the loss, Will offered him a sly smile and his hand, palm facing upwards. An invitation that Hannibal took immediately, interlacing their fingers as Will pulled them both out of the kitchen.

Their clothes found themselves discarded on the way to the main bedroom, and only when the last one fell, Will pushed Hannibal towards the mattress. Hannibal crawled back to the center as Will chased him over him, and when his lips touched Hannibal’s stomach, he bowed his head backwards.

Time seemed to stop and accelerate as Hannibal’s fingertips sank in Will’s skin, the man’s mouth and deft fingers drawing hoarse moans out of him that echoed in the room. Hannibal tried very hard not to dig his nails too deep, not to claim desperately and ask silently for being claimed in the same way. He tried very very hard not to hold Will tight, as if he were afraid of him suddenly fading away, dissipating from his fingers like sand in the wind. Hannibal tried, but he suspected that he didn’t succeed.

In the aftermath, they remained quiet, their breaths and hearts slowing down and synchronizing. Hannibal felt the other's forehead rubbing his chin, and he combed the soft and deranged mass of curls. He wondered how they would look like when the silver replace the brown and smiled at the idea.

They were silent for a long time, half of Will's body on top of his, limbs tangled, hands caressing and fingers fidgeting over their mixed sweat. Hannibal closed his eyes and allowed a wave of beatitude to go through his mind and body. Then, he suddenly felt a warm breath and wet mouth on his shoulder, and right afterwards, teeth pressing the flesh so hard that he opened his eyes abruptly.

"Oh."

"Don't complain."

"I didn't complain; it merely surprised me. That came out of the blue."

Will raised his head and an eyebrow at the same time, and then he smiled like a Puck, his face being the spitting image of a mischievous forest creature.

"I don't need a reason to mess up with you."

Hannibal laughed as loud as only a man completely shattered can laugh.

"After all this time it seems that I didn't learn that lesson yet. Maybe I'm not as intelligent as everybody thinks."

Will's smile grew wider, white teeth glistening in the dark.

"Of course you think you are, you pretentious asshole."

Their laughs entangled imitating their own bodies. When they became quiet again, Will nuzzled the spot he had bitten before, licking a long stroke that both heightened the pain and soothed it once he finished.

"Are we going to talk about it?"

"Talk about what?"

"You know what."

Will dropped his head on Hannibal's chest again, that time looking up at him, but Hannibal didn't meet his eyes immediately. He sighed, because it was useless trying to deny that something was going on with him. It wasn't something he could've kept from Will for too long.

Hannibal was silent for a long time, their hearts now stilled and beating against the other's chests. Hannibal was still struggling to find the words when Will's voice sliced the silence.

"I wanted to have the last word."

Hannibal finally met his eyes, and Will propped himself over his elbow, but he didn't move away from him so they would still be skin on skin, limbs together, his left hand brushing his stomach without taking his eyes off of him.

And right then, Hannibal realized Will already knew what he had had in his mind that day. That didn't surprise him; after all, they were mentally bonded as much as they had been physically only moments before. But it still amazed him.

"You always had the last word," Will continued saying. "When you put me in jail, when you gutted me, even when you turned yourself in. Always the last word. And that day, when I said goodbye to you… I decided that *I* would have the last word that time."

"Did you intend to have the *last* last word? Did you expect that? Did you wish that?"

The three questions came so fast and hard that Hannibal even shocked himself. He hadn't intended to say them but now, after the words were spoken, he realized that those question had been wandering his mind for a long time. Hannibal felt exposed and raw and not entirely comfortable with his behavior. He wanted to know because he had always wanted to know; because he was curious. And even if Will had planned that, it didn't matter anymore. He knew that in the end, he had chosen him. But a part of him didn't want Will to admit that he really meant to walk away from something Hannibal wanted so desperately back then.

Will remained silent and Hannibal felt what could be defined as an approximation of guilt for putting him in that position. He was about to tell him to forget it when Will spoke again; barely a whisper, as if he were having an epiphany and revealing it at the same time.

"I didn't come back home."

Silence.

"I didn't come back, and I didn't go to the hospital, either. It was supposed to be safe. The Dragon was supposed to be dead and I could return to my house, to my family and my dogs…But I didn't. I went to the motel I was staying." Will made another pause, two slow breaths, in and out, before speaking again. "I think I was waiting for something. I didn't know I was waiting, but I was. I guess somehow I knew that it wasn't over."

Hannibal closed his eyes, absorbing the words. He opened them and fixed a slightly troubled gaze on the eyes next to him.

"But those could've been your last words anyway. You could have died; you didn't know if Francis was going to kill you."

"I suppose I took my chances."

Hannibal nodded in acceptance. After all, he had played that game too, many times. And he had paid.

"During the XV century, mystical writers believed that the path to reach mystical union involved three stages: purgation, illumination and union," Hannibal started saying, his voice

low but steady. “The enlightening of the mind should come from pain, physical or spiritual; transforming suffering into divine presence. They were inspired by the Passion of Christ, when human suffering got to its culmination, entering into a completely new dimension. An act linked to love. Mystics thought that to match that love and liberate their hearts and souls, they had to be willing to suffer equally, to earn their own wounds. We certainly did.”

Will seemed to take a moment to collect his thoughts. Then, he moved one of his hands and pressed it over the other man’s heart “I changed you, and you changed me, but we are still what we are. Despite this, despite everything I don’t know if we can stop hurting each other and messing up things. I don’t know if we will be capable of keeping this life forever…”

Hannibal tensed at his words and Will must’ve sensed it, because he tightened his embrace.

“I don’t know what is going to happen, Hannibal. But I know that I love you. I love you and you love me. And maybe that’s enough.” Will smiled faintly. “Maybe that’s just fine.”

Hannibal wanted to say a lot of things. He felt the words amassing in his throat and the back of his eyes, like water confined in a dam. He knew that if he opened the gates, everything would flood through them. So he took a breath, ready for it. But instead of saying everything he wanted to say, he heard a voice that didn’t sound at all as his own.

“All right, then.”

Will kissed him softly where he had bitten before, and Hannibal only felt a blissful dull pain. A pain he didn’t mind at all.

“Sleep now, love.”

Hannibal complied, closed his eyes and soon fell asleep, peacefully and without any dreams to disturb him.

End Notes

Thank you so much for all your kudos, comments and everything in the first fic. We hope you like this one as well♥

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